

(e) The losing competitive area may, at its discretion, include employees who decline to transfer with their function as part of a concurrent reduction in force.

(f) An agency may not separate an employee who declines to transfer with the function any sooner than it transfers employees who chose to transfer with the function to the gaining competitive area.

(g) Agencies may ask employees in a canvass letter whether the employee wishes to transfer with the function when the function transfers to a different local commuting area. The canvass letter must give the employee information concerning entitlements available to the employee if the employee accepts the offer to transfer, and if the employee declines the offer to transfer. An employee may later change and initial acceptance offer without penalty. However, an employee may not later change an initial declination of the offer to transfer.

[52 FR 10024, Mar. 30, 1987, as amended at 60 FR 3062, Jan. 13, 1995]

§ 351.303 Identification of positions with a transferring function.

(a) The competitive area losing the function is responsible for identifying the positions of competing employees with the transferring function. A competing employee is identified with the transferring function on the basis of the employee's official position. Two methods are provided to identify employees with the transferring function:

- (1) Identification Method One; and
- (2) Identification Method Two.

(b) Identification Method One must be used to identify each position to which it is applicable. Identification Method Two is used only to identify positions to which Identification Method One is not applicable.

(c) Under Identification Method One, a competing employee is identified with a transferring function if—

(1) The employee performs the function during at least half of his or her work time; or

(2) Regardless of the amount of time the employee performs the function during his or her work time, the function performed by the employee in-

cludes the duties controlling his or her grade or rate of pay.

(3) In determining what percentage of time an employee performs a function in the employee's official position, the agency may supplement the employee's official position description by the use of appropriate records (e.g., work reports, organizational time logs, work schedules, etc.).

(d) Identification Method Two is applicable to employees who perform the function during less than half of their work time and are not otherwise covered by Identification Method One. Under Identification Method Two, the losing competitive area must identify the number of positions it needed to perform the transferring function. To determine which employees are identified for transfer, the losing competitive area must establish a retention register in accordance with this part that includes the name of each competing employee who performed the function. Competing employees listed on the retention register are identified for transfer in the inverse order of their retention standing. If for any retention register this procedure would result in the separation or demotion by reduction in force at the losing competitive area of any employee with higher retention standing, the losing competitive area must identify competing employees on that register for transfer in the order of their retention standing.

(e)(1) The competitive area losing the function may permit other employees to volunteer for transfer with the function in place of employees identified under Identification Method One or Identification Method Two. However, the competitive area may permit these other employees to volunteer for transfer only if no competing employee who is identified for transfer under Identification Method One or Identification Method Two is separated or demoted solely because a volunteer transferred in place of him or her to the competitive area that is gaining the function.

(2) If the total number of employees who volunteer for transfer exceeds the total number of employees required to perform the function in the competitive area that is gaining the function, the losing competitive area may give preference to the volunteers with the

highest retention standing, or make selections based on other appropriate criteria.

[52 FR 10024, Mar. 30, 1987, as amended at 60 FR 3062, Jan. 13, 1995]

Subpart D—Scope of Competition

§ 351.401 Determining retention standing.

Each agency shall determine the retention standing of each competing employee on the basis of the factors in this subpart and in subpart E of this part.

§ 351.402 Competitive area.

(a) Each agency shall establish competitive areas in which employees compete for retention under this part.

(b) A competitive area must be defined solely in terms of the agency's organizational unit(s) and geographical location, and it must include all employees within the competitive area so defined. A competitive area may consist of all or part of an agency. The minimum competitive area is a subdivision of the agency under separate administration within the local commuting area.

(c) When a competitive area will be in effect less than 90 days prior to the effective date of a reduction in force, a description of the competitive area shall be submitted to the OPM for approval in advance of the reduction in force. Descriptions of all competitive areas must be made readily available for review.

(d) Each agency shall establish a separate competitive area for each Inspector General activity established under authority of the Inspector General Act of 1978, Public Law 95–452, as amended, in which only employees of that office shall compete for retention under this part.

[51 FR 319 Jan. 3, 1986, as amended at 56 FR 65416, Dec. 17, 1991; 62 FR 62500, Nov. 24, 1997]

§ 351.403 Competitive level.

(a)(1) Each agency shall establish competitive levels consisting of all positions in a competitive area which are in the same grade (or occupational level) and classification series, and which are similar enough in duties,

qualification requirements, pay schedules, and working conditions so that an agency may reassign the incumbent of one position to any of the other positions in the level without undue interruption.

(2) Competitive level determinations are based on each employee's official position, not the employee's personal qualifications.

(3) Sex may not be the basis for a competitive level determination, except for a position OPM designates that certification of eligibles by sex is justified.

(4) A probationary period required by subpart I of part 315 of this chapter for initial appointment to a supervisory or managerial position is not a basis for establishing a separate competitive level.

(b) Each agency shall establish separate competitive levels according to the following categories:

(1) *By service.* Separate levels shall be established for positions in the competitive service and in the excepted service.

(2) *By appointment authority.* Separate levels shall be established for excepted service positions filled under different appointment authorities.

(3) *By pay schedule.* Separate levels shall be established for positions under different pay schedules.

(4) *By work schedule.* Separate levels shall be established for positions filled on a full-time, part-time, intermittent, seasonal, or on-call basis. No distinction may be made among employees in the competitive level on the basis of the number of hours or weeks scheduled to be worked.

(5) *By trainee status.* Separate levels shall be established for positions filled by an employee in a formally designated trainee or developmental program having all of the characteristics covered in § 351.702(e)(1) through (e)(4) of this part.

(c) An agency may not establish a competitive level based solely upon:

(1) A difference in the number of hours or weeks scheduled to be worked by other-than-full-time employees who would otherwise be in the same competitive level;

(2) A requirement to work changing shifts;